

# Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act of 2021: Statements of Support

## Food Research & Action Center

*Quote attributable to Luis Guardia, President*

“The [Food Research & Action Center](#) (FRAC) and nearly 800 other organizations from all 50 states and the District of Columbia [strongly support](#) the Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act, introduced by Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) and Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA), to help strengthen and expand access to nutritious meals for young children through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

“The bill proposes many positive improvements that will enhance the important role CACFP plays in improving the quality of child care programs, enhancing the nutrition of meals served, supporting small businesses, and making care more affordable for low-income working parents and other caregivers. The need to expand program reach is now more important than ever as communities continue to respond to the pandemic’s impact on food security and child care.

“The bill includes critical provisions for CACFP, including:

- improving the adequacy of benefits by allowing another meal or snack for children in a full day of care to
- improving reimbursement rate adjustments for child care home providers to meet the increasing costs of serving meals,
- streamlining participation by allowing for-profit child care centers to move to annual eligibility,
- maximizing technology to eliminate burdensome and outdated paperwork, and
- making improvements to the serious deficiency process.

“This bipartisan legislation will go a long way in allowing parents to work and children to learn, grow, and thrive, and will be important in ensuring CACFP grows as funding for the childcare industry also grows.”

## National CACFP Forum

### Quote

“The Forum believes equity in CACFP can be achieved if we remove systemic barriers that often give advantages to better-resourced programs. The improvements made through the Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act will help alleviate these barriers, increase CACFP access, and strengthen CACFP’s role in supporting good health and nutrition.” said Reynaldo Green, President of the National CACFP Forum.

## Full statement

The [National CACFP Forum](#) strongly endorses the [Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act of 2021](#) introduced by Representatives Bonamici (D-OR) and Herrera Beutler (R-WA) as it will provide much needed enhancements to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and expand access to nutritious meals for young children who need them the most. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) uses federal dollars to provide nutritious meals and snacks to low-income children in child care centers, family child care homes and afterschool programs. CACFP is very important – both in terms of the number of children it serves and its positive impact on young children in child care. Nationwide, preschoolers are consuming diets too high in calories, saturated fat, and sweets and too low in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy. The healthy food provided by CACFP, of course, makes a substantial contribution towards meeting the nutritional needs of children in child care, particularly low-income children. CACFP helps to assure that children in child care receive good nutrition through ongoing training, technical assistance and support.

The bill proposes many positive changes that better support children and families who depend on CACFP for the healthy meals and snacks that the program provides. The Forum believes equity in CACFP can be achieved if we remove systemic barriers that often give advantages to better-resourced programs. The improvements made through this bill will help alleviate these barriers and will increase CACFP access and strengthen CACFP's role in supporting good health and nutrition.

## National CACFP Sponsors Association

"We applaud Rep. Bonamici and Rep. Herrera Beutler for co-sponsoring this much needed CACFP legislation. It is time to expand access and strengthen the CACFP, which not only combats food insecurity in young children but strengthens small business and supports working families," said Blake Stanford, Board President, National CACFP Sponsors Association

## National Women's Law Center

*Quote attributable to Whitney Pesek, Director of Federal Child Care Policy*

"There are few obligations we have to our children more vital than maintaining their nutritional health and well-being. The Early Childhood Nutritional Improvement Act will support child care providers working to ensure that the children in their care receive the nutritious meals and snacks they need for their growth and development. We are proud to endorse this measure and thank Representative Bonamici for her leadership on this most critical of issues facing our families."

## Save the Children

"The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is critical to ensuring children in child care centers get the nutrition they need to thrive. But, millions of children are missing out. That's why we support the introduction of the Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act, which would strengthen and improve the CACFP," said Cassidy Pont, Lead Advocate, Domestic Policy, Child Nutrition at Save the Children.

"This legislation is needed now, more than ever before, with more children and families struggling with hunger than before the pandemic. We applaud Representatives Bonamici and Herrera Beutler for prioritizing child nutrition, particularly now, when so many families and child care centers are struggling financially due to pandemic-related challenges."